

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-13 are pending in this application, the only independent claim being claim 1. By this Response, Applicants perfect their claim for priority in the present application, and traverse the rejection.

Summary of the Official Action

In the Official Action, claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e), as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,969,356 (Nishibayashi).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection respectfully are requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that the application contains allowable subject matter, and that claims 2-13 are allowable over the prior art.

Perfection of Claim For Priority

Applicants submit herewith a sworn English translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 2003-116292, filed April 21, 2003, thus perfecting Applicants prior claim for priority in this application.

Removal of Cited Art as Prior Art

Applicants submit that the Nishibayashi '356 patent is not prior art against the present application. The Nishibayashi '356 patent has a U.S. filing date of March 15, 2004. The present application claims priority to Japanese Patent Application No. 2003-116292, filed April 21, 2003.

Conclusion

Applicants believe that the present Response is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action, and submit that the application is in condition for

allowance. Favorable consideration of the claims and passage to issue of the application at the Examiner's earliest convenience earnestly are solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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JAO:CPW/tje

Attachment:

Sworn English Translation of JP 2003-116292

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